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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY

Bulgaria

SUBJECT

Conditions At Number 9 September Shoe Plant

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1. The Nine September Shoe Plant is located in the Bulima Tivada ward along the railroad line and near Batalova Vodenitsa [sic]. In addition to male and female footwear the plant produces military materials such as ammunition belts, leather bags, and various types of munitions. The director of the plant is Blagov Mikhov. [redacted] the Party Secretary of the plant is Konstantin Apostolov. A Party activist in the plant is Olga Khranova. [redacted] [redacted] Kaval'ov, [fnw], is a specialist and instructor in the plant. The plant has other Soviet specialists but they are not permanently at the plant. Hence their names are not known.
2. The shoe factory is divided into five shops. The work in the five shops is of the assembly line type. In the first shop the leather is cut; the second shop does the sewing of the leather for shoes and for various military goods. The soles and heels are made in the third shop; in the fourth shop the shoes are processed and in the fifth shop the shoes are completed. The chief of the fourth shop is [fnw] Radkov, about 40 years old, who is a member of the Communist Party. During 1953 he was specializing in the USSR. Every shop has a Party secretary. The Party secretary for the fourth shop is Trecho (?) (last name unknown).
3. From 180 to 220 workers work in one shop. The entire plant employs about 900 - one thousand workers on one shift. There are two shifts. One begins at 0600 hours and ends at 1430 hours. The second begins at 1500 hours and ends at 2230 hours. The production depends on electricity. If the electricity is stopped, which is frequent, production of course is low. Soles for the factory are supplied by the hide factories in Dubovo and Ruse. Many times the supplies are not sent in time or in sufficient quantities. This is of significance chiefly because it shows that the workers are committing sabotage. The machines of the 9 September plant are from Czechoslovakia even though they have Soviet names on them.

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4. The pay of workers depends on the type of work they do. Leaders get the highest pay and the pay of Soviet specialists is not known. It is a State and Party secret. Women are the lowest paid workers.

The following amounts were withheld from this 600 leva: 30 leva bachelor tax, 40 leva income tax, three leva membership to the Dimitrov Union of Peoples' Youth, six leva membership in the General Professional Trade Union, 30 leva for coal (if he has signed up for a house), 12 leva for subscription to periodicals such as "Trud" and "Rabotnichesko Delo," 10 leva for Soviet books and periodicals.

5. The shop leader is in charge of the fulfillment of the norms. The plant also plans above norm production. Nobody fills the norms, let alone the above-norm plans. Up to 1953 quantity was emphasized. Starting with 1954 quality is emphasized. The quality of shoes is very poor. This is due to the poor quality of hides and soles in the hide factories of Ruse and Dubovo, and Pleven. This is also due to the passive resistance on the part of workers. The workers in the shoe factory are without shoes in the winter and their families are also without shoes.

6. Up to February 1954 the plant was guarded by 30 uniformed militiamen, who patrolled inside and outside of the plant 24 hours a day. These militiamen had dogs with them. There are two militia huts on posts in the factory region. Lately the plant has been guarded by civilians, as a security measure. In addition to civilian militiamen the plant is also guarded by agents of the State Security. These State Security men not only guard the plant but also watch out for fires, sabotage, breaking of machinery, etc. These State Security men have their informers among the workers. These informers tell the State Security about anything that is going on in the plant - sabotage plans, the breaking of machinery, criticism, etc. There are many cases where workers disappear. Workers are very dissatisfied in the plant, but this dissatisfaction does not show itself openly. The informers, who are very dangerous, were formerly in the police or in the tax administrations, or even in the Branik organization. Many of the workers are against the regime. Sabotage occurs in the form of non-fulfillment of norms, in not fulfilling above-norm production, in damaging machinery, and in damaging shoes. During 1952 several storehouses were burned down. These storehouses contained finished shoes, hides, and soles, as well as military goods. This sabotage was committed by the workers. At meetings workers are told about the poor production and they themselves complain about the poor supply of food. There are cases when individual Communists are punished if they are guilty.

7. Workers listen mostly to the Voice of America, Radio London, Radio Ankara, and, to a lesser extent, Radio Paris and Rome. The Communists are well armed. They have arms even in their homes. They are afraid of a rebellion, of the immigration and of an internal resistance on the part of workers and farmers. Soviet specialists control the economic sector as well as the cultural sector of the country and transportation. These arrive from the USSR very poorly dressed and after two or three months they live in luxury. They receive food in special stores, have cars, and go to resorts. The people are waiting for help from abroad but nothing can be done against Soviet weapons inside the country.

8. Many workers and peasants are brought to the courts by the State Security. They are tried as saboteurs and enemies of the people, as opposition members, and enemies of the government; they are tried for not fulfilling norms and for not fulfilling state delivery quotas. Many trials are held behind closed doors. Such trials include those people who have left Bulgaria or who have been caught at the border. Only members of the Party propaganda sections of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party are allowed to be present at these trials. These people consequently give directives for uncovering such illegal persons.

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9. The DOSO (Voluntary Organization for Defense Cooperation) is a semi-military organization. Young Communist workers and farmers are members. Local leaders are designated by the central leadership which has its headquarters in each okoliya center. The supreme central leadership is attached to the Ministry of Defense (Voenno Ministerstvo). This supreme leadership is under the political section of the Ministry of Defense which also includes the representatives of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party, as well as representatives of the Ministry of Interior, and State Security. The young men are trained in motor work, engine repair, parachuting, shooting, antiaircraft and chemical defense, not revealing state secrets, state frontiers and Party discipline. From the midst of DOSO members informers of the State Security are selected in the factories, mines, cooperative farms and machine tractor stations. DOSO activists are the front men of the State Security. DOSO clubs are in every factory and enterprise. They meet and are trained in the factories. All of the members are armed and cooperate with the government.
10. Standard of living - prices - 1 kg of bread - 1.70 leva
 1 kg dobruza (?) bread 3 leva
 1 m of wool cloth - 290 leva
 a man's shirt - 48 leva
 a man's suit - 320 leva
 a wool suit - 750 leva
 a well-cut suit (wool) - 1,200 leva
 men's shoes -(made of rubber, cloth
 or hide or leather) - 110 leva
 men's leather shoes with soles - 280 leva
 one kg of meat - from 12 - 22 leva
 lard - 16 leva per kg
 sugar - 12 leva per kg
 wine mixed with water - 5.60 leva per liter
 one liter of brandy - 24 leva
 a special type - 32 leva
 one kg of cheese - 12 leva
 one kg of yellow cheese - 10 leva
 one kg - of Easter bread - 15 leva
 watches - 1200 - 2000 leva
 Bulgarian radio receivers from
 700-1200 leva
 Czech radio receivers - 3600 leva
 cigars of prime quality - 2.40 leva
 second quality - 1.80 leva

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